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3 February 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Redirection of the National Intelligence Survey (NIS) Program

REFERENCE: USIB-D-51.1/8, 28 August 1963

1. The NIS Committee recommends that the remaining 18 topical detailed sections be discontinued as part of the NIS Program and that emphasis and resources be directed toward production of a top quality, reformatted General Survey, augmented on a highly selective basis by some of the more broadly useful material from the detailed sections.

Rationale

2. Gradual attrition of the detailed sections over the years has produced a melange of topical coverage. Shifting requirements for basic intelligence, a more realistic appraisal of what the NIS Program can achieve, and dwindling resources have each played a role in eroding the original concept of unified, well-integrated topical coverage. Discontinuance of each topic was agreed to only after careful consideration of identifiable user requirements and availability of alternative coverage, but it is now becoming evident that the cumulative effect of the attrition has produced a program which must seem an enigma to many NIS readers.

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3. For many of the remaining detailed sections, area coverage has also been markedly curtailed. Transportation and Armed Forces sections, as examples, are now being produced for only a few countries. Others continue to be produced according to the USIB-approved NIS plan for country priorities, but the resultant disparate pattern of coverage contributes to reader uncertainty of what to expect from the NIS Program.

4. User surveys have indicated that some of the more specialized detailed sections have a relatively limited, albeit steadfast, readership. Faltering interdepartmental interest in these topics raises the question of their continued suitability in a national intelligence program. As is conceptualized in the Reference, this specialized detailed basic intelligence, which for the most part is slanted toward military requirements, might more appropriately be produced departmentally.

5. Continuing and increasing budgetary restrictions dictate a reduced profile for the NIS. This reduced profile, however, can be made to meet the needs of the intelligence community by placing full emphasis on the production of a coordinated, high-quality, and broadly based General Survey which would better utilize the available resources than the present disparate program. Also, the production structure and organization of a new General Survey would enable the program to meet any future requirements for an expanded national basic intelligence effort.

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Plan

6. Programed production of all detailed sections would be discontinued by the end of FY72.

7. The General Survey, slightly expanded and restructured in a bound-by-chapter format, would become the body of the program. In addition to providing greater efficiency and flexibility in maintenance, the new format will enable the NIS to selectively incorporate into the appropriate chapters -- or as separate annexes -- some of the more widely useful data now contained in the detailed sections. This will apply particularly to DoD-produced information which cannot be adequately produced and published departmentally. A study is underway by the NIS Committee to identify that material which is suitable for integration into the General Survey.

8. The semiannually produced Basic Intelligence Factbook would continue to be published in both the classified and unclassified versions.

9. The special NIS on oceanography would be continued in response to expanding government interest in the topic.

Impact

10. Total elimination of the remaining detailed sections would reduce NIS production by about 30%. Some of the manpower saving implicit in the cutback would be redirected to implementing the production of the enhanced General

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Survey. Although precise figures on anticipated money and manpower savings have not yet been determined, it is estimated that the overall NIS resources saving would be about 15%.

Action Requested

11. The NIS Committee requests that USIB, in accordance with its responsibility for providing policy direction to the NIS Program as outlined in the Reference, take the following action:

- a. Approve the plan to discontinue production of NIS topical detailed sections by the end of FY72.
- b. Authorize the NIS Committee to select from the detailed sections that broadly useful material which is suitable for integration into the new General Survey.

JOHN KERRY KING
Chairman, NIS Committee

Attachment
Attrition of NIS Detailed Sections

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ATTRITION OF NIS DETAILED SECTIONS

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